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THE "A.L." No. 436.

BRIGHT STORY READERS.

Grade III.

494

THE LOST GALLEON.

By

C[illegible]RD RUTLEY.

...in Great Britain.

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THE LOST GALLEON

(A Story of the Times of George I).

By

C. BERNARD RUTLEY.

E. J. ARNOLD & SON Limited,
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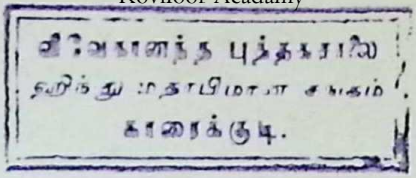

THE LOST GALLEON

(A Story of the Times of George I).

CHAPTER I.

THE STOWAWAYS.

"HI, there! how many more times am I to tell you to get off my ship, you young rascals?" bellowed Captain Simon of the *Seaflower*, advancing threateningly towards Dick Fennel and his cousin, Anne, who had just climbed on board.

The children did not wait for a second bidding; and before the burly captain could reach them, they had jumped back on to the wharf, and had retreated to a safe distance.

"I've asked him three times to take us," said Dick, sitting down on a bale of goods, and gazing with longing eyes at the graceful vessel, "and each time he has laughed at me."

"Did you say we would wait on the gentlemen in the cabin, and do any work he wanted us to do?" asked Anne.

"Yes, and he said that he couldn't have the ship littered with children on the sort of voyage he was going."

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For some moments there was silence, whilst both children gazed wistfully at the ship; then Anne said,

"Do you really think they are going after treasure, Dick?"

"So 'tis rumoured," answered the boy. "Sam the waterman told me that they were going to search for a Spanish treasure ship which was driven ashore somewhere in South America in Queen Elizabeth's reign. He seemed to know all about it. He said that Sir Robert Warham, who is fitting out the ship, has a map showing just where the galleon went ashore, and that if she's still there, every man in the *Seaflower* will come back as rich as a king."

"It must be lovely to be rich," murmured Anne, her eyes still fixed on the vessel. "I wonder where Sir Robert got the map from."

"Sam said it is what they call an heirloom, something that's handed down in a family from one generation to another. You see, Anne, it was an ancestor of Sir Robert's who captured the galleon from the Spaniards; but before he and his crew could sail the ship home, a great storm arose, and she was driven ashore. So they had to leave her; but, first, Sir Robert's ancestor made a map showing where she lay, for of course he meant to go back with another ship, and take away all the gold and jewels. But he never did; for soon after he got

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back to England, he was taken ill and died, and the map was forgotten until our Sir Robert found it, and made up his mind to go and see if he could find the old treasure ship."

"I wish they would take us," said Anne longingly. Then, after a moment's pause, "Uncle beat me again this morning."

"I know," replied Dick, wrathfully. "And he beat me yesterday."

"He is much too fond of beating us," continued Anne. "Also I am getting too big a girl to be beaten like that, so I have decided not to be beaten any more."

Dick gazed at his cousin in astonishment. "But how are you going to stop him?" he asked. "He's so awfully stern and strict."

"I'm going to run away."

"Run away!" exclaimed Dick.

"Yes, I'm going to run away; we're both going to run away, for of course you're coming with me, Dick."

"Am I?" cried the boy. "And where are we going to run to?"

"To South America."

"To South America! But I don't understand. How can we run away to South America?"

"Oh! Dick, you are silly," cried Anne. "Listen, I've planned it all in my mind. The

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Seaflower sails to-morrow morning, so to-night, after Uncle has gone to bed, I will dress in a suit of your clothes, and we'll slip out of the house, run down to the wharf, climb on board the *Seaflower*, and hide ourselves until the ship is well out to sea. Then if they find us, it won't matter, for they'll take us with them rather than sail back to Bristol just to put us ashore."

Dick looked doubtful. "Captain Simon will be awfully angry," he said at last. "We'll probably get a bigger beating than ever Uncle gave us."

"Well, it will be only one anyway, and after that we'll make ourselves so useful that everybody on board will be glad we came. You will come, won't you, Dick? Think of the adventure and the treasure. Perhaps they'll give us a share, and we'll come home so rich that Uncle will never be nasty to us again."

The boy's eyes lit up. "Yes, I'll come, Anne." Then, after a careful glance around to see that no one was listening, "Let's get away from here. If Captain Simon sees us talking, he may grow suspicious. Besides, we must buy some food to take with us. It'll never do to ask Cook for any."

The rest of the day the children spent in secret preparation, and it was not until an hour past midnight that they again approached the wharf. Then, had anybody been looking, he would have

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seen two slim boys, each carrying a large bundle, stealing through the shadows towards the dark bulk of the *Seaflower*, and, after a cautious glance around, slipping silently on board.

Once on the deck, the children stood hardly daring to breathe, whilst they listened for any sound which might show that they had been discovered. But the deck of the *Seaflower* was dark and silent, and presently Dick took Anne's hand, and led her towards an open hatchway which he had seen that afternoon.

Step by step they advanced, and presently a black hole appeared in the deck before them.

"How ever are we going to get down there?" asked Anne, in a scared whisper. Truth to tell, now that they had started on the adventure, she was beginning to wish that she had never suggested it, and that she was safely back in her warm bed at home.

"It's all right," answered Dick encouragingly. "Here's a rope. You slide down first; then I'll lower the bundles and follow. Give a jerk on the rope when you are down."

Anne had often climbed ropes and trees at home, and now Dick gave her no time to think of what might be hidden by the darkness below; for the next moment he had put the rope into her hands, and an instant later she was sliding down into the black hold of the ship.

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The girl landed on a pile of boxes, and jerked the rope to show that she had arrived safely. Instantly the rope was drawn up and lowered again with the two bundles tied to the end, and a few seconds later Dick landed on the boxes beside his cousin.

"All right," he whispered. "Let's find a place now where we can hide and sleep."

Accordingly the children crept over the piles of boxes and bales, and presently, coming to a clear space between two large casks, they lay down, and so tired were they after their adventures that, in spite of the hardness of their bed, they were instantly fast asleep.

They were aroused many hours later by the movement of the ship as she heaved up and down on the ocean swell, and by the sound of men's voices in the hold close at hand.

"Here we are, Tom," said one voice. "This is what Cooky wants. Barrel o' beans."

"Right y'are," came another voice. "Where's that rope?"

Peering out from their hiding-place, Dick and Anne saw two seamen who, by the light of a single lantern, were tying a rope round a small barrel so that they might haul it up to the deck above. Soon they had fixed the rope to their satisfaction, and they were about to mount a ladder leading to the open

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hatchway, when an exclamation of surprise came from one of the men, and, stooping down, he picked something off the floor at his feet.

"Here, look at this, Tom," he cried. "A cap, or I'm a Dutchman, and a boy's cap, too. And there ain't no boys on this barque, Tom, so I asks you, how did this cap come here? Unless there be boys on board as oughtn't to be on board."

Slowly the sailor took his foot off the ladder, and, whilst the man called Tom held the lantern high, the two sailors peered round the hold. Apparently they saw nothing, and, after a half-hearted search amongst the bales and boxes close at hand, they were about to start upwards towards the deck again, when a rat, frightened by the voices and the light, made a dash from one hiding place to another, and, in doing so, ran over Anne's outstretched body.

With a scream the girl jumped to her feet, and, knowing that they were discovered, Dick rose also, and a few seconds later rough hands had gripped the children.

"Well, I'm blest if there ain't a couple of 'em," cried one of the sailors. "Here, my lads, you come on deck, and we'll see what Captain Simon has to say. You'll get a rope's-ending for this, mark my words. Tom, yell to the chaps above, and pass these young fellows up."

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"Speak up now! What are you doing on board my ship, you young rascals?" bellowed Captain Simon, five minutes later, as the children stood before him, guarded by their captors.

Dick looked swiftly about him. A group of five gentlemen were standing behind the captain, and as his glance left the ship, Dick saw that they were already out of sight of land.

"Come on now, answer!" roared the captain, "or we'll see if a rope's end will loosen your tongues. What——" He broke off with a cry of amazement. "Heavens, if it isn't the lad who was always a-pestering me to take him on as cabin-boy!" He looked closer at Anne. "And the girl, too, dressed in boys' clothes. Well, this ——"

Captain Simon scratched his head in perplexity; then, turning to one of the gentlemen, he said, "Here's a pretty coil, Sir Robert. These youngsters be the nephew and niece of Master Fennel, who lives near the toll-gate. A very worthy man, though maybe a trifle stern."

"Well, they will have to come with us to America now, Captain. I'm not going to put back just to land a couple of stowaways," replied the gentleman addressed as Sir Robert. Then, turning to Dick, he said, "Now, my lad, what's the meaning of this? Why did you and your cousin stow yourselves away on my ship?"

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The face of the speaker was stern but not unkind, and Dick answered boldly,

"Because we got tired of being beaten by our uncle, sir, who is a very stern man, as Captain Simon has said. Also, when we heard that you were going after treasure, we thought it would be great fun to go with you."

"Treasure!" exclaimed Sir Robert, frowning. "Who told you we were going after treasure, boy?"

"Sam the waterman, sir," replied Dick. Then, seeing the look on Sir Robert's face, he added, "Why, sir, 'tis no secret. Everybody on Bristol waterfront knows that the *Seaflower* is sailing in search of a lost galleon."

Sir Robert swung round with a mighty oath, to face the captain and the little group of gentlemen.

"You heard what the boy said, and I did my best to keep this matter secret, and have spoken to no one about our plans, save those upon this deck. Therefore, 'tis plain that one of you has been talking, else how did these children hear of the lost galleon?" He swept the little group of adventurers with his eyes. "I'll not ask the name of the man who betrayed our secret," he continued. "The damage is done, and there is naught to be gained by quarrelling amongst ourselves. But, by this time, I doubt not there is as choice a crew of

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Bristol rogues upon our heels, as could be found upon the seas; and before we see England again, belike we shall have to fight for our lives."

Sir Robert turned to the children again, and for some moments regarded them in silence.

"Methinks, my young friends, that you'll get your fill of fun before this voyage is over," he said grimly. "As for you, young mistress, there is no woman's gear on board, and I dare say you brought none with you, so you will e'en have to make the best of the boys' clothes you wear. Now off with you. I have treated you kindly, because you have brought me news, and now I shall be on my guard; but behave yourselves, or you will find I can wield a stick as thoroughly as your stern uncle."

CHAPTER II.

SHIPWRECKED.

Dick and Anne were overjoyed at having escaped so easily, and soon made friends with everybody on board. Their chief favourites were an old sailor named Ben, and Master Nicholas Trelawny, a nephew of Sir Robert. Soon the children learned to make themselves useful about the ship, helping the cook in the galley, or the steward in the cabin; and when there was nothing else to do,

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there was always old Ben to spin them sea yarns, or Master Trelawny to tell them tales about Cornish giants and fairies.

So passed two weeks, during which favourable winds carried the *Seaflower* swiftly towards her destination ; then one morning, when the children came on deck, they found Sir Robert, and Captain Simon, and the rest of the ship's company gazing intently across the sea behind them.

" What's the matter ? " Anne asked Master Trelawny. " Why is everybody looking behind us ? "

" Because we are being followed, Anne," replied the young Cornishman. " D'you see that tiny patch of white just above the horizon ? 'Tis the topsail of a ship, and for three days now that ship has been following us, though this is the first time we have seen her from the deck. Sir Robert swears she is a Bristol barque, following us to see where we go, and he is determined, if she follows us much longer, to turn and clip her wings before we reach our destination."

" D'you mean that there will be a fight ? " asked Dick eagerly.

" That's what I mean, young fire-eater," smiled Master Trelawny. " Sir Robert's idea is that if she's what we think her to be, our best chance of finding the treasure, and getting it home safely, is

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to knock away some of her spars with our long gun there, and so stop her from following us any longer."

But there was no fight that day, and presently the sail vanished ; and had it not been for the man at the masthead, no one would have known that the strange ship was still following in their wake. The next day the look-out reported that the pursuer was still there ; and when, on the third day, the strange vessel was still following them, Sir Robert swore that he would end the pursuit, and ordered Captain Simon to put the *Seaflower* about, and sail towards the stranger.

An hour passed, and the unknown vessel was in full view from the deck of the *Seaflower*. She was a long low craft with a black hull and a great spread of canvas, and suddenly Dick, who knew most of the ships which sailed from Bristol port, cried out,

" I know that ship ! She's the *Blackbird*, belonging to Captain Blunt."

Sir Robert heard him, and, turning to Captain Simon, said, " D'you hear that, captain ? The boy says yonder ship is the *Blackbird*, belonging to Captain Blunt."

" Aye, Sir Robert, I heard him," answered the captain, " and he's right, too, more's the pity."

" Why, has Captain Blunt a bad name ? " asked young Trelawny.

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"A bad name he has, Master Trelawny," replied the captain grimly. "Red Blunt they call him in Bristol, and, though he pretends that the *Blackbird* is a peaceful trader, many folks say that she sails under the black flag. Ah! see that? Whoever commands yonder ship means business."

The strange ship was now almost within gunshot of the *Seaflower*, and the captain's exclamation had been called forth by a puff of smoke from one of the stranger's ports. A few seconds later, a deep boom reached the *Seaflower*, and at the same moment a round shot pitched into the water a hundred yards from the ship.

Now the *Seaflower* was put about, and began to sail away from the stranger. Sir Robert and Captain Simon had no intention of fighting a pitched battle with the pirate. Their hope was to cripple her from a distance by maintaining a running fight with the long gun that the *Seaflower* carried amidships, and then to sail away, leaving their enemies to repair the damage as best they could.

Crash! The *Blackbird*, for now there was no longer any doubt that the pirate was Captain Blunt's ship, had swung round and fired her whole broadside at the *Seaflower*, and at the same instant a great black flag, decorated with a skull and cross-bones, fluttered out from her masthead.

But the range was too great, and the enemy's

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shots struck the water astern of the *Seaflower*. And now Captain Simon shouted an order, and it was the *Seaflower's* turn to swing round until her long gun pointed towards the enemy. The children, who had been forgotten in the excitement of the fight, saw old Ben squint along the sights; then there came a great burst of flame and smoke from the muzzle of the big gun, followed by a mighty roar which shook the *Seaflower* from stem to stern.

Gazing towards the enemy, Dick and Anne saw a round hole suddenly appear in one of her white sails.

"Missed her mainmast by a foot," growled Ben, as the *Seaflower* swung back into her course again, and the gun's crew sponged and reloaded their weapon.

Now the shots from the enemy's bow guns began to fall close to the *Seaflower*, for the ship had lost ground in firing her big gun, and the *Blackbird* had crept perilously near.

"Cannot you put more sail on her, Captain?" asked Sir Robert. "They seem to have no gun as heavy as our long Tom; so if we can keep out of range of their smaller guns, we can wing them at leisure."

"She's got every stitch on her that she can carry, Sir Robert," replied Captain Simon anxiously. "This is a risky game we are playing. If Ben

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fails to wing yonder craft with his next shot we shall be within range of her broadside, and we shall have Red Blunt and his cut-throats swarming over our sides before we know what's happening. Ah! see that?"

The captain's exclamation had been caused by a splintering crash, as a shot from one of the enemy's guns struck the side of the *Seaflower*, peeling a long splinter of wood off her planking. A hoarse cheer from the pirates showed that they had seen the success of their shot, and, fearful lest another shot might strike one of the *Seaflower's* spars, Captain Simon shouted to Ben to hurry with the loading of the gun.

"Aye, aye, Captain, all ready," came Ben's answer.

"Take your time, man," cried Sir Robert encouragingly. "Five for you, and a guinea for every man of the gun's crew, if you wing yonder ship."

Now Captain Simon shouted an order to the steersman, and again the *Seaflower* swung round until her great gun pointed towards the fast approaching enemy. With breathless interest Dick and Anne watched old Ben. Would he bring down one of the enemy's masts? He seemed to be a terrible time taking aim. The *Blackbird* was creeping closer and closer. Was Ben never going to fire? Anne clutched Dick's arm as at last the

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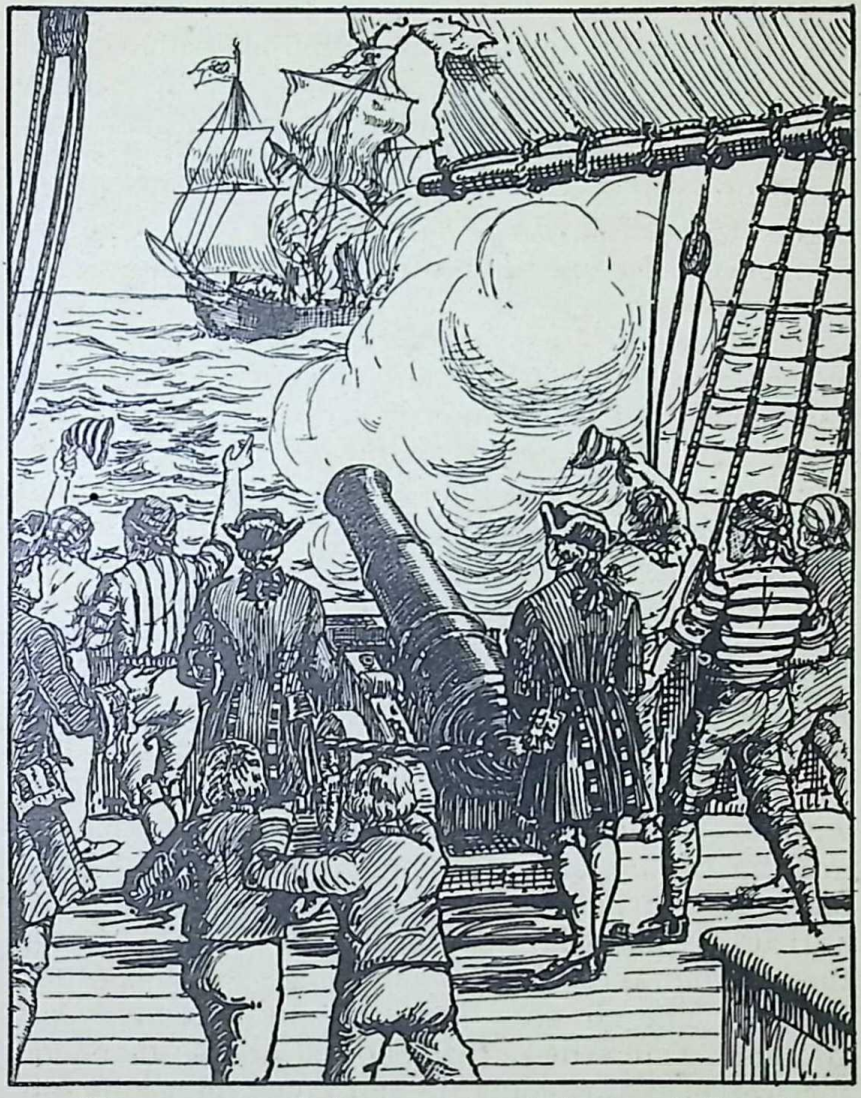
old sailor jerked up his hand, and almost immediately the roar of the great gun was heard. Eagerly every eye on the *Seaflower* gazed towards the enemy; then suddenly a cheer burst from every throat, for the great iron shot had struck the mainmast of the *Blackbird*, and brought the towering pile of canvas crashing down in ruins upon the enemy's deck.

A hoarse yell of rage came floating across the water from the enemy, and the *Blackbird's* bow guns continued to fire angrily at the *Seaflower*. But already the *Seaflower* was drawing away from her crippled foe, and, two hours later, the *Blackbird* had disappeared from view over the edge of the horizon, and, for the first time for many days, the *Seaflower* was pursuing her voyage free from her dangerous pursuer.

The next three days passed uneventfully. The *Blackbird* no longer followed behind, and the crew of the *Seaflower* were congratulating themselves that they were going to reach their journey's end without further misadventure, when, towards the evening of the third day, the wind fell, and great black clouds began to bank themselves up on the horizon. Anxiously Captain Simon gazed at the threatening sky. Higher and higher banked the clouds. The air grew hot and stifling, and at last all hands were sent aloft to shorten sail, so that soon the *Seaflower* was going up and down on a long oily



'Every eye on the *Seaflower* gazed towards the enemy.'—*Page* 18.

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swell under bare poles. Yet still another hour passed and nothing happened. A breathless hush hung over the sea. In the west the sun sank in a blaze of fiery crimson, whilst overhead the clouds now formed a vast black canopy.

"Better go below, young master and mistress," said old Ben, approaching the children, who stood leaning on the bulwarks. "If I knows anything about the sea, there's going to be a hurricane, and when it comes it'll come mighty sudden, you can take old Ben's word for that. Ah, hark to that!"

As Ben spoke, a low moaning sound fell upon the children's ears, and, looking astern, they saw a line of white foam stretching from horizon to horizon, and approaching the ship at tremendous speed. There was no time for them to go below. Louder and louder grew the noise of the approaching hurricane, until the moaning sound had become one long piercing shriek, and, the next instant, with a deafening roar the wind struck the helpless ship.

With a lurch the *Seaflower* plunged forward, whilst a mighty wall of water swept right across her decks, and would have carried Anne overboard, had not Ben held her tightly. Never in all their lives had the children heard such an uproar. The wind shrieked and yelled through the rigging, until it seemed that the masts must go crashing overboard, whilst the ship staggered before the fury of

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the tempest, her timbers groaning and straining under the blows of the great waves.

By this time darkness had fallen, and at last, after some difficulty, Ben got Anne and Dick below. Now began a night of terror and danger. The hurricane seemed to get stronger as the hours passed. From overhead came the crash of mighty seas as they swept the ship, so that none but the captain and the crew were allowed on deck. The whole vessel seemed to tremble before the fury of the wind, and presently, as a fiercer gust than ever struck the ship, there came a mighty crash from above, followed by the voice of Captain Simon shouting commands, and the rush of many feet.

"What has happened?" whispered Anne, clutching hold of Dick in her terror.

"One of the masts has gone, I expect," answered Dick, striving hard to keep his voice steady. "Wait here; I'll go on deck and find out."

On hands and knees Dick crept up the companion-way, and peered out into the night. It was pitch dark, but as his eyes grew accustomed to the gloom, the boy made out the ruins of the mainmast lying across the deck, and the flitting forms of the crew as they laboured desperately with axes and knives to cut away the wreckage. The *Seaflower* was lurching horribly under the drag of the fallen mast, whilst every moment great seas swept

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right over her ; but at last the crew cut the wreckage free, and as the mast drifted away astern, the motion of the ship became easier, and the great waves ceased to sweep her decks.

So passed the long, terrible night, and many a time the people below thought the ship was going down beneath them. But the dawn came at last, and found the *Seaflower* still afloat, though she was a very different ship from the trim vessel of the day before. Somewhere below her waterline she had sprung a great leak, through which water poured in torrents, and although the hurricane had blown itself out, and the sea was going down, it needed all the efforts of the sailors at the pumps to keep the inrushing water from sinking the ship. Of the mainmast nothing but a ragged stump remained, whilst, in all directions, great gaps appeared in her bulwarks where the mighty seas had crashed their way through the stout planking.

The adventurers were indeed in a perilous plight, and, all that day and the following night, the sailors and gentlemen had to take turns at the pumps, whilst the ship's carpenter strove desperately to discover and repair the damage. Another day dawned, and still the water poured into the ship, and now everyone was so weary that the leak began to gain, and the water to mount higher and ever higher in the hold.

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" I fear the *Seaflower* has sailed her last voyage," Dick heard Sir Robert say to Master Trelawny. " Captain Simon is having food and water put into the boats. Fortunately 'tis not very far to the nearest land, and if the weather holds fine, we may yet come out of this adventure alive."

So passed the morning, and with every hour the ship sank lower and lower in the water. Afternoon came, and there was no one with strength left to man the pumps, and Captain Simon was about to give the order to launch the boats, when from the look-out aloft came the cry, " Sail-ho ! "

At the cry new life seemed to enter into the weary crew. Again the pumps were manned in a desperate effort to keep the ship afloat until help arrived. Presently the topsails of the stranger appeared above the horizon, and in another half-hour the whole of her was visible from the deck of the stricken vessel. Even at that distance she seemed strangely familiar to Dick, and suddenly Captain Simon's gruff voice rang out,

" By Heaven ! Sir Robert, 'tis the *Blackbird* with Red Blunt and his rascally crew on board. Now I wish that we had never seen his topsails, for better far to have been in our open boats at the mercy of the wind and sea, than the prisoners of Red Blunt."

An hour later Sir Robert, Captain Simon, and

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every soul who had sailed on board the *Seaflower* lay prisoners in the hold of the pirate ship, whilst of the *Seaflower* nothing remained but some floating wreckage.

CHAPTER III.

NEW FRIENDS.

The days which followed were terrible ones for all who had sailed on board the *Seaflower*. For most of the time the men were kept prisoners in the stifling hold of the *Blackbird*, and only for a short while each day were they allowed on deck, and then they were watched over by an armed guard of ruffianly pirates.

Dick and Anne, partly because they were children, and partly because Captain Blunt's cabin-boy had fallen ill, were allowed to run free, but soon they found that life on board the *Blackbird* was very different from what it had been on the *Seaflower*. Captain Blunt was a great red-headed ruffian who cuffed them if they did not obey his orders at once, and his rascally crew followed his example, so that the children were soon wishing that they were back in their uncle's house in Bristol again.

So passed a miserable week ; then, one morning, a faint blue line appeared on the horizon ahead, and from the talk of the pirates the children knew that

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it was South America. Great was the excitement on board. Captain Blunt had taken possession of Sir Robert's chart showing the spot where the galleon had been driven ashore. It seemed to be in a shallow bay surrounded with thick forests, and as the ship drew near to the land, every eye on board stared shorewards, hoping to be the first to see the bay and sight the wreck.

" Oh, it's a shame, a wicked shame ! " whispered Anne fiercely to Dick, as the children watched Captain Blunt comparing the shore ahead with Sir Robert's chart. " Why should these men steal our treasure ? Dick, Dick, can't we do something to stop them ? "

" Be quiet ! " whispered Dick, as in her excitement Anne clutched his arm and shook him. " If you talk so loudly, they'll hear. I've been wondering how we might set Sir Robert and our men free. But we must wait till we reach land. If the pirates have to hunt for the treasure, perhaps they'll grow careless in their watch, and then will be our chance."

By this time the land was only a mile away, and the opening into a small bay appeared in the black line of forest which clothed the shores.

" There's the place, my lads," roared Captain Blunt, pointing ahead, " and there we'll find enough treasure to make us all as rich as kings. Take her right in, Sam," he shouted to the steersman.

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" Belike the galleon will be under water, so a golden guinea to the first man who sights her hull."

A wild cheer greeted his words, and the pirates worked with such a will that, within an hour, the *Blackbird* was safely at anchor inside the bay. Then, manning every boat, the pirates started to scour the surface of the water, peering down into its crystal depths as they rowed, for sight of the sunken galleon.

Meanwhile Dick and Anne, left on board with the few men who remained to guard the ship, stood leaning on the bulwarks, watching the forest which fringed the shores of the bay. Gaily plumaged birds and brilliant butterflies fluttered from tree to tree, whilst, in some places, the forest was a blaze of colour from orchids and other tropical flowers.

Never had the children seen such a sight before, and they were gazing spellbound about them, when their eyes were attracted by a movement amongst the undergrowth close to the water's edge, and near the spot where one of the boats, manned by half a dozen pirates, lay upon the calm surface of the bay.

The next moment Dick had clutched Anne's arm, for a dark face had appeared amongst the undergrowth, followed by another and another, until a score of fierce eyes were gazing at the unconscious pirates. Then, before either of the

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children could shout a warning, the faces disappeared, and a flight of arrows came out of the bushes, killing four of the pirates outright, and wounding the other two.

Instantly there was uproar. At the cries of their wounded comrades the pirates in the other boats rowed towards the spot, and discharged their muskets into the bush. But the Indians had already vanished, and, fearing lest they should fall into another ambush, Captain Blunt ordered his men back to the ship, promising that they should have vengeance on their enemies the following day.

Great was the wrath of the pirates at the death of their four companions, whilst their fury was increased by the fact that they had found no trace of the lost galleon. That night, the children kept out of the way of Red Blunt and his men, and it was not until the following morning, after most of the pirates had rowed away, armed to the teeth, and bent on punishing their attackers of the day before, that the children came forth from their hiding place.

The morning was hot, and the men who remained on board the *Blackbird* lolled lazily on the deck, and took no notice of Dick and Anne. The nearest shore was only a hundred yards away, and presently Dick, noticing that the pirates were all gazing in the opposite direction, whispered to Anne,

" Let's swim ashore. I'm sick of being cooped

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up on board ship, and it will be great fun exploring the forest."

Anne was quite ready for the adventure, and, having made sure that their captors were not watching them, the children slipped silently overboard into the water. They were both good swimmers, and in a few minutes they had reached the shore, and disappeared into the forest.

It was quite a different forest from any they had ever seen at home. It was full of strange scents and sounds, and in some places the undergrowth was so thick that it was all they could do to force their way through. Soon they were completely lost, but so interested were they in their surroundings that they wandered on and on, plucking the flowers and chasing the gaily coloured butterflies, until they were suddenly recalled to their whereabouts by the report of firearms from some point ahead, followed by an outburst of savage yells and cries.

At the sounds the children stopped aghast; then, realizing that the pirates must have found the Indians, and were fighting them somewhere in front, curiosity got the better of their fears, and they began to creep cautiously towards the sounds of conflict.

For a time the battle ahead raged with fury; then the sounds gradually grew less and less, until at last they ceased altogether. The children looked

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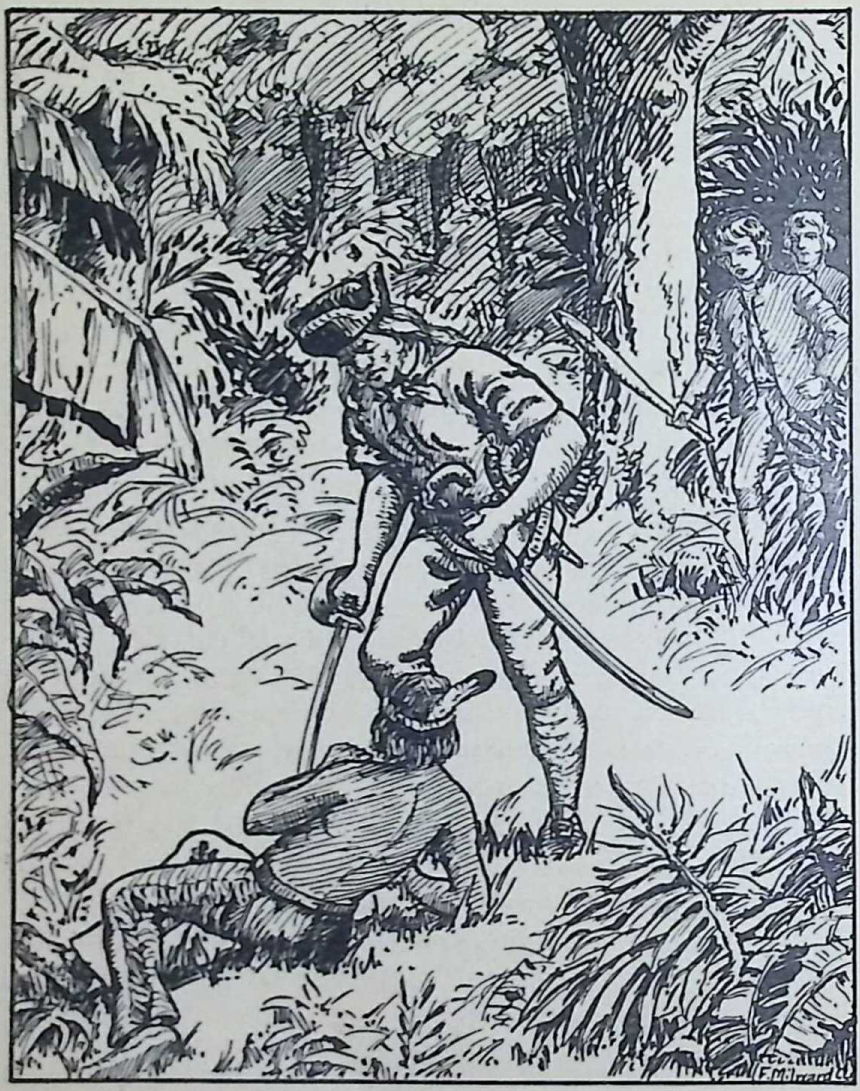
about them in uncertainty. Had the pirates been victorious, or had the Indians won? Suddenly Anne felt afraid. The forest, which had been so friendly and interesting a few minutes ago, now seemed full of lurking enemies, and, clutching hold of Dick's hand, she began to drag him back in the direction in which she thought the ship lay. But they had gone only a few yards, when a faint cry reached them from a short distance ahead, and, creeping forward, the children came upon a strange sight. In a tiny glade stood Red Blunt, his great arms bared and a gleaming sword in his right hand, whilst, helpless at his feet, lay a handsome Indian boy.

For a moment the children gazed spellbound at the sight. What was Red Blunt doing to the boy? Dick's hands tightened round a stout cudgel which he had cut to help him force a way through the undergrowth. Red Blunt was speaking to the boy in some strange language, but the boy shook his head and refused to answer, and suddenly, with a fierce oath, the man raised his right hand as though to pierce his captive with the sword. In the same instant Dick sprang forward, and struck the pirate a crashing blow on his head with his stout club.

Without a sound Red Blunt collapsed and fell to the ground, whilst Anne ran forward to Dick's side, crying out at what he had done.



'Helpless at his feet lay a handsome Indian boy.'—*Page* 29.

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"He's all right," answered Dick scornfully. "He's only stunned. Quick! Help me carry this boy away before Red Blunt gets his wits again."

Dick's words made Anne pull herself together, and with one at his head and the other at his feet, the children lifted the young Indian, and carried him away. It was hard work. The boy was wounded and could not help himself, but at last the children reached the bank of a tiny stream, and, thinking they had come far enough from their enemy, they laid their burden down upon the ground.

Now Anne tore strips off her jacket, and washed and bound the boy's wounds. A bullet had passed through one of his legs, whilst there was a sword cut in his arm, and as she worked upon him, the boy's great soft eyes beamed with gratitude. Presently he started to talk, but the children shook their heads to show that they did not understand, so he began to make signs to them, and at last he made them understand that he wanted them to stay with him.

"It's the only thing we can do," said Anne, when at last they had grasped the boy's meaning. "After the blow you gave him, Captain Blunt will kill us if we go back to the ship. Of course you did right, but how ever are we going to live now?"

"With him," answered Dick promptly, nodding towards the Indian boy. "Because we saved his

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life, the Indians will be our friends, and for all we know, Anne, they may be able to help us to rescue Sir Robert and the rest of the *Seaflower's* crew."

Accordingly, the children made signs showing that they would stay with their new friend, at which the boy smiled contentedly, and began to utter sounds like the cry of a bird. For some time he repeated the cry without getting any reply; then, from a point some distance away, an answering call sounded through the forest, and, a few minutes later, six stalwart Indians, armed with bows and arrows, appeared upon the scene. At sight of the children, the Indians halted and raised their spears threateningly, but as the Indian boy spoke to them in their own language, their manner changed, and one of them, a tall handsome man, stepped forward, and made signs to the children that he was their friend, and that they were to follow him.

"I believe he's the boy's father, Dick," said Anne. "Just look how alike they are."

"And he seems to be the chief, too," replied Dick. "Come on, Anne, let's go with them; they won't hurt us."

Accordingly, the children followed their new friends through the forest. Even burdened with the wounded boy, the Indians moved swiftly along paths known only to themselves, and, at the end of half an hour's steady marching, the little party came

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out upon the shores of a small lake, round which were clustered the thatched huts of a native village. At a glance the children saw that there was great excitement in the village. In some places the women were wailing as though mourning the dead, whilst, at sight of Dick and Anne, the villagers rushed forward threateningly. But this time the boy's father spoke to them, and, as though by magic, the cries of anger changed to friendly gestures.

Dick and Anne were now given a hut close to the chief's, in which lay the wounded boy, and as the days passed, and nothing was heard of Red Blunt and his rascally crew, they began to feel safe in the Indian village. Most of the time the children spent in the company of the Indian boy, who recovered rapidly from his wounds, and gradually, by words they picked up and signs, they heard about the fight between the Indians and the pirates.

The boy, whose name was Manco, told them that the Indians had beaten off the pirates. He told Dick and Anne that they were quite safe in the Indian village, for no white man could ever find his way there, and he told them how spies, sent out by the chief, brought back the news that the pirates were still searching the bay from their boats, whilst some were even engaged in diving into the water.

"Why these bad men come here?" asked

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Manco one day, partly by words and partly by signs.

Dick and Anne between them replied in the same manner, and at last they made the boy understand that the pirates had a number of their friends prisoners on board the ship, and that they had come to find the treasure of the wrecked galleon. It took a long time to make him understand all that, but when he did, Manco smiled, and replied,

"Friends of Dick and Anne Manco's friends, friends of Manco's father and Manco's tribe. Help rescue them from bad men. Bad men find no treasure. Manco know where treasure is. Show it to Dick and Anne when better."

CHAPTER IV.

THE LOST GALLEON.

So passed two weeks, and Manco was almost well again. From the Indians the children learned that the pirates were still searching for the lost galleon, and they had ceased to fear that Red Blunt might find them, when, early one morning, they were awakened by the sudden roar of musketry, followed by an outburst of savage yells. Half awake, they rushed out of their hut, to find the Indians flying in all directions before a score of pirates, who, in spite of what Manco had said, had

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found their way to the Indian village. For a moment Dick and Anne watched the scene with scared eyes ; then, as some pirates caught sight of them, and rushed forward with shouts of rage, they turned and fled panic-stricken into the forest.

For half an hour they continued their flight, pausing only to get their breath, and to listen for sounds of pursuit. But the pirates had lost trace of them almost as soon as they had entered the forest, and as the children increased the distance between them and the village, the shouts and screams gradually died away, until once more the forest lay silent and still around them.

At last, assured that they were safe for the moment, the children sat down on a log to rest.

" What made them attack the Indians, do you think, Dick ? " asked Anne at last.

Dick sat silent, thinking, for some moments before he replied ; then he said,

" Perhaps Red Blunt has got tired of searching the bay for the treasure, and he wants to get hold of some of the Indians, and make them tell him where it is."

Anne nodded. " I expect that's it," she answered. " Oh ! Dick, what shall we do ? We daren't go back to the ship, and we daren't go back to the village. Oh, how I wish we had never come on this awful voyage ! "

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Dick had no comfort to give his companion. He was feeling rather frightened himself, and presently the children continued their way through the forest. Hour after hour they wandered on, without any idea of where they were going. When they got hungry, they ate berries from the bushes around them, and it was well past midday, and they were feeling very tired, when suddenly they saw the glint of water in front of them. At the sight the children hastened forward, and, five minutes later, they were standing on the shores of a small bay, whilst in front of them, through a gap in the forest, they saw the wide stretch of the open sea.

The children looked about them with interest. Across the entrance to the bay great ocean breakers plunged and roared, but the surface of the inlet lay calm and still, and, as she gazed around her at the forest-clad shores, Anne suddenly had a great idea.

"Dick! Dick!" she cried, "this is just like the bay where the galleon is supposed to have been driven ashore. Suppose Red Blunt has made a mistake, and has been searching the wrong bay all the time? Perhaps we are quite close to the galleon and the treasure at this very moment. Oh, Dick, let us look! How glorious if we could discover the treasure after all!"

Dick was bound to confess that Anne might be

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right, and, their weariness forgotten, the children began to hunt for the lost galleon. They walked right round the little bay, they slipped off their clothes, and swam hither and thither over its surface, to see if they could discover the treasure ship beneath its crystal-clear waters. But of the galleon they saw no signs, and at last, weary and disappointed, they came out of the water, dressed, and flung themselves down in the shade at the edge of the forest. Soon Dick was fast asleep, and Anne was about to follow his example, when, chancing to look up at the tree above her, she saw a face gazing down at her through the leaves.

Anne's scream of terror woke Dick. "What's the matter?" he cried. Then, as Anne pointed to the face looking down at her through the foliage, the boy also uttered a cry of alarm, and the children were about to run away, when something still and immovable about the face above them made Dick pause. The next instant the boy cried out, "Why, it's not a real face at all. It's a wooden face. Anne, Anne, that's the figurehead of a ship; I do believe we've found the galleon."

It did not take Dick and Anne long to discover that the face was indeed part of the figurehead of a great ship, a ship which was so buried amongst the trees, and so overgrown with bushes, that it was difficult to tell it apart from the surrounding forest.

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Pulling themselves up by the aid of stout creepers, the children reached the deck, and found it covered with grass and trailing plants, but with the stumps of two stout masts still standing amongst the undergrowth.

"How ever did she get here?" said Dick, gazing about him in amazement.

"Why, that's easy, silly!" replied Anne scornfully. "The storm brought her here, of course. I expect a huge wave carried her right into the bay, and dropped her here high and dry in the forest where she has remained ever since. Oh, come on, Dick! Don't stand there staring. Let's see if we can find the treasure."

The galleon had a great towering stern, and the children found the door of the main cabin hanging loose on rust-eaten hinges. Inside was a soft green gloom, and as they stood surveying the interior, they became aware of a row of boxes all round the walls of the cabin. The wood of the boxes was rotten with damp, and at a kick from Dick one of them fell to pieces, disclosing six long yellow bricks.

For some moments the children gazed at the bricks, hardly able to believe their eyes; then, with a simultaneous cry of "the treasure!", they began wrenching the other boxes apart. In all but one similar golden bricks met their gaze; but from the last, as it fell apart beneath Anne's eager

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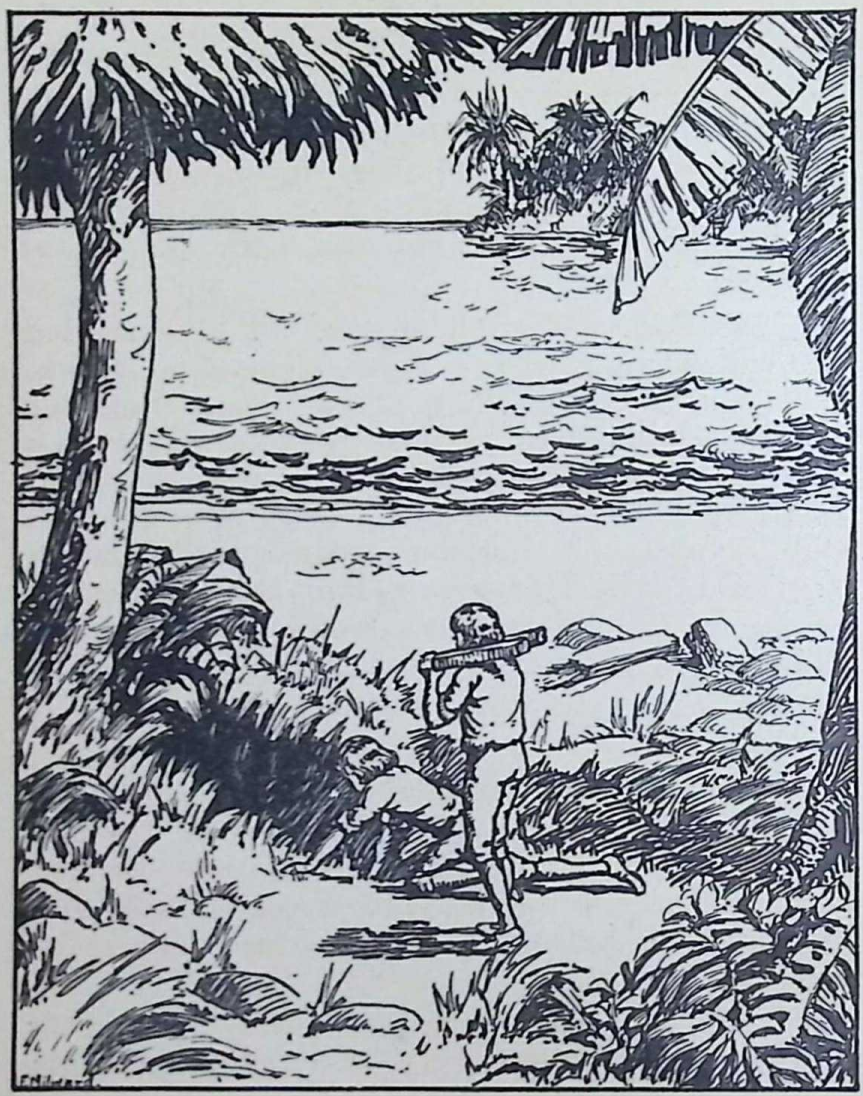
hands, a cascade of glittering jewels, diamonds, rubies, sapphires, emeralds, and pearls tumbled out upon the floor of the cabin at their feet.

"Dick, we must carry the treasure away from here and hide it, in case Red Blunt has captured any of the Indians, and they tell him about the galleon."

It was Anne who spoke, and, after talking the matter over, the children decided to carry the gold and jewels to one of the forest-clad points which marked the entrance to the bay, and there bury them in a hole in the sand. There were still several hours of daylight left, so they started to move the treasure at once. First, they carried the jewels to their new hiding place; then, each shouldering two bricks at a time, they began to move the gold, and so well did they work that, by nightfall, half the treasure had been safely stored in a deep sandy hole, where no one who did not know where to look would ever find it.

That night, the children slept curled up in the cabin of the galleon, and the next morning, as soon as it was light, they went on with their task, after a breakfast of shellfish and berries. It was tiring work under the hot sun, but they stuck at it manfully, and by midday the last golden brick had been removed from the galleon, and the hole in which the treasure lay, filled in with sand.



'By nightfall, half the treasure had been safely stored in a deep sandy hole.'—*Page* 39.

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"What shall we do now?" asked Dick, as he and Anne sat at the edge of the forest close to the sea, and gazed back at the galleon. "We've found the treasure, but it's no good to us or anyone else, unless we can set free Sir Robert and our men, capture the *Blackbird*, and sail back in her to England. I wish——"

What Dick wished he never said, for at that moment Anne placed a hand across his mouth, whilst with the other she pointed towards the edge of the bay a hundred yards away. There, standing just outside the fringe of undergrowth, was Red Blunt, his fierce eyes sweeping hither and thither; whilst, even as the children watched, hardly daring to breathe, other pirates, leading two frightened-looking Indians, joined their leader. The children had removed the treasure just in time.

Noiselessly the children crept deeper amongst the bushes, and lay there watching their enemies. Presently they saw Red Blunt turn, and speak to the Indians. They saw the captives point towards the galleon, and the pirates stream away in that direction, and five minutes later a hoarse cheer told the watchers that their enemies had found the ship.

"It's lucky for us that we always walked in the water, when moving the treasure," said Dick. "If we hadn't, we should have left a track, and

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Red Blunt would soon have found where we buried the gold. Listen, Anne. They've discovered that it's gone."

Dick's words had been called forth by a yell of rage which had suddenly come from the other end of the little bay, and the next instant Red Blunt appeared again on the seashore. Even at that distance, Dick and Anne could see that he was in a furious rage. He was shouting and waving his arms in all directions, and, in less time than it takes to tell, the pirates, who had clustered round their leader, had dispersed in all directions to search the surrounding forest.

"Come on, Anne!" cried Dick, seizing the girl's hand, and dragging her to her feet. "They know the gold has only just been taken away, and they're going to search the forest. We must run. If the pirates catch us, they'll know we've taken the gold, and they'll make us tell where it is."

So the children's flight through the forest began again, but this time they followed the fringe of trees along the seashore, for Dick said,

"If we keep along the shore, we're bound to reach the bay where the *Blackbird* is moored."

Luckily for the children, the pirates had no idea who had taken the treasure, or where to look for those who had outwitted them, and soon the shouts of the furious men, as they rushed hither and

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thither through the undergrowth, were left behind. For two more hours the children kept on ; then they saw a break in the forest in front of them, and recognized the mouth of the bay in which the *Blackbird* lay.

Going down on their hands and knees, the children crept through the undergrowth, until they reached a place where they could see the whole of the bay. For some moments they could hardly believe their eyes. They looked and looked again. There was no mistake. This was the bay where the *Blackbird* had been anchored. Over there was the tree under which they had landed the day they swam ashore. There was actually one of the *Blackbird's* boats lying high and dry upon the gleaming sand, but of the *Blackbird*, of the ship which had brought them thither, there was no sign. The surface of the bay lay empty and desolate ; the *Blackbird* had disappeared.

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CHAPTER V.

TO THE RESCUE.

For some time the children were too dazed by this unlooked-for catastrophe to know what to think. Dick had hoped to find some way of setting their friends free, whilst the majority of the pirates were hunting for the treasure, but the disappearance of the *Blackbird* had upset all his plans.

Anne suggested that perhaps the pirates left in charge of the ship had sailed her round to the bay where the galleon had gone aground, but Dick explained that, had they done so, he and Anne must have seen the ship as they tramped along the seashore. No, something else had happened to the *Blackbird*. Either she had been captured by unknown enemies, and carried off whilst Red Blunt and his men were busy ashore, or else Sir Robert and the crew of the *Seaflower* had broken free, and gained possession of the ship.

"But if they did that, where are they, Dick?" asked Anne. "Surely they wouldn't leave us at the mercy of the pirates and the Indians?"

"Perhaps they think we're dead," replied Dick gloomily. "They would know nothing about how we swam ashore, or how we rescued Manco, and quite likely they would give us up for lost. Besides, we're only a couple of stowaways, and who cares what happens to stowaways?"

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" But they'd be leaving the treasure," cried Anne.

" They don't know there is any treasure," answered Dick. " You see, Anne, they would know that the pirates had hunted all over this bay without finding anything, and they would know nothing about our discovery, so quite possibly they would think there was no treasure, and sail straight home."

At Dick's words Anne began to cry. She was feeling very tired, and the shellfish which she had eaten had done little to satisfy her hunger. Dick tried to comfort her, and at last, wearied out, the children fell asleep, whilst some distance away a dark figure, which for some hours had been following their trail through the forest, crept closer and closer. At last the follower reached the bush beneath which Dick and Anne lay sleeping, and, parting the branches, gazed down upon them. As he did so, a smile overspread his face, and, reaching out a brown arm, he took hold of Dick's shoulder, and shook him, saying,

" Dick, Anne, wake up. Manco here."

The children were overjoyed to see their friend safe and sound. Manco had brought food with him, and whilst Dick and Anne ate hungrily, he told them that, though some had fallen before the fire of the pirates, and two had been made prisoners, the majority of his tribe had escaped the pirates' attack.

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When he had finished, Dick related their adventures, and ended by pointing to the bay, and asking Manco if he knew where the *Blackbird* had gone.

At Dick's question the Indian boy got very excited, and it was some time before the children understood the gabble of words and signs with which he answered them. But at last they learned that some hostile Indians had come in their canoes the night before, and, having surprised the pirates left on the ship, had towed the *Blackbird* out of the bay, and along the coast to a small river a few miles away.

" Are our friends safe ? " asked Anne anxiously.

At her question Manco looked gloomy.

" Anne's friends safe now," he said. " Indians bad men. Enemies Manco's tribe. Don't know how long Anne's friends be safe."

The news filled Dick and Anne with consternation, and after they had talked the matter over together, they decided to follow their friends, and try to rescue them from this new danger. Manco promised to help them, and disappeared into the forest, to return in a short time with a dozen stalwart warriors of his tribe. Then, from the undergrowth at the edge of the bay, three long canoes were dragged forth, and in a short time Dick and Anne and their Indian friends were skimming over the calm waters of the sea.

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Their way lay northwards through a maze of tiny islands covered with forest and tropical undergrowth. For a time the Indians paddled swiftly forward, but presently they began to exercise greater caution. Slower and slower became their progress. Now one canoe went ahead, the Indians in it keeping a sharp look-out for lurking enemies, and so at last they reached a tiny island about two hundred yards from the shore, and opposite the mouth of a narrow river. Pointing to the river, Manco said,

"Manco's enemies live up there. Big canoe gone up there; Dick's, Anne's friends up there; all up there, very bad!"

Dick and Anne agreed with Manco that things were looking very bad indeed. How could they possibly hope to rescue their friends, and recapture the *Blackbird* from a tribe of hostile Indians? Yet unless they did both, they would never see England again. Anne felt very much like crying, and Dick was staring gloomily at the mouth of the river, wondering what on earth he could do, when something moving along the dark silent stream caught his gaze. The next moment a cry of astonishment burst from his lips. "Look, Anne, look!" he cried. Anne looked, and rubbed her eyes; then looked again. There was no mistake. Floating down the river towards them, stern foremost, was the *Blackbird*.

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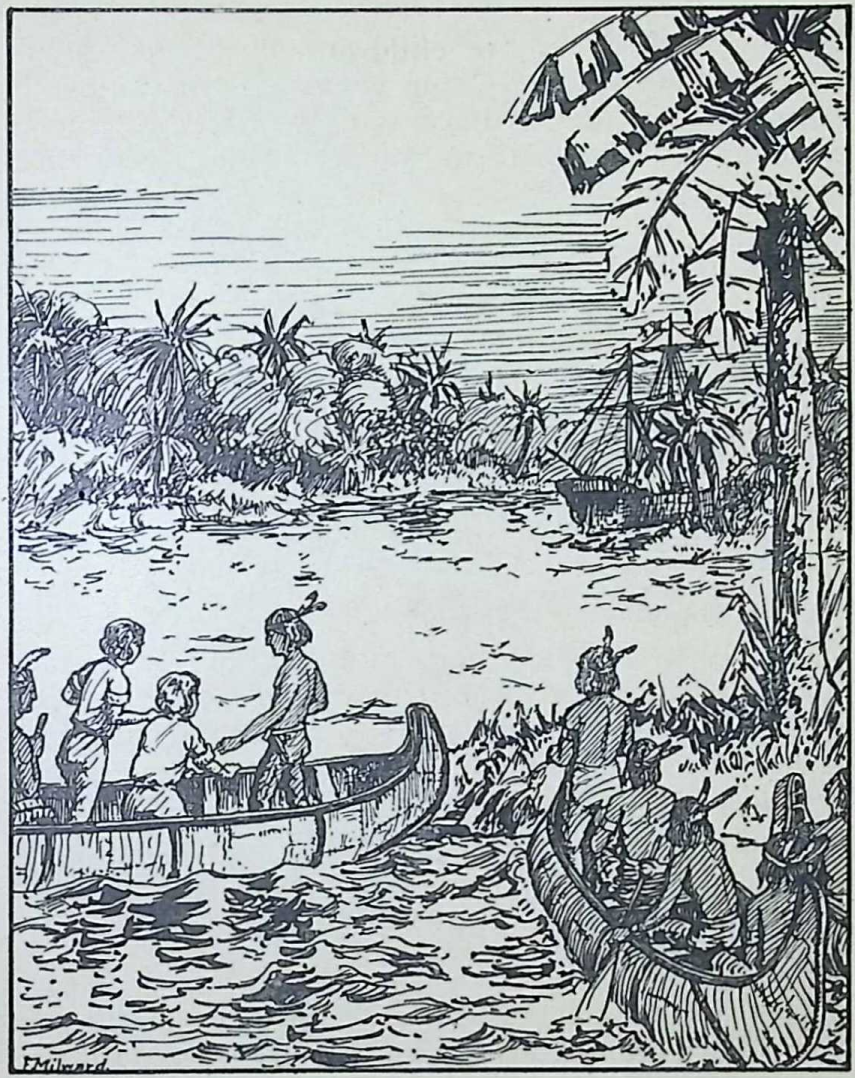
For some time the children and their friends watched the slowly drifting vessel. Dick wondered why she was coming down the river stern foremost. As she drew nearer to the mouth of the river, Dick saw that her sails were furled just as though she were lying at anchor, whilst her decks showed empty in the red light of the setting sun. Where was everybody? Where were the Indians who had captured her, the pirates, Sir Robert, and the crew of the *Seaflower*, and why was the ship floating down the river without a soul on board? Dick glanced at the water. A tree trunk, which he had seen issue from the mouth of the river, was floating silently past the canoe, and at the sight Dick cried out,

"I know what's happening, Anne. Don't you see? The Indians who captured the *Blackbird* towed her up the river, but they didn't know how to anchor her, so they just left her floating free, and now the tide is bringing her out to sea again. Anne, we must get Manco and the Indians to tow her away, and hide her amongst the islands; then, as soon as we've got the treasure on board, and rescued Sir Robert and our men, we shall be able to start back for England at once."

By this time it was almost dark, but it did not take Manco and the Indians long to understand what Dick wanted them to do, and soon the



'The children and their friends watched the slowly drifting vessel.'—*Page* 48.

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Blackbird was being towed through the water by the three canoes, whilst Dick stood at her helm. As he had guessed, there was no one on board, and two hours later the *Blackbird* was safely hidden in the middle of a small group of islands. Then, wearied with their exertions, the children and their Indian friends lay down upon the deck, and were instantly fast asleep.

The sun was already high in the sky when the children were aroused by wild yells. Springing to their feet, they found the Indians crouching behind the bulwarks, listening intently, and presently, at a sign from Manco, they followed the Indian boy ashore, and across to the other side of the island against which the *Blackbird* was moored.

At the sight which met their gaze cries burst from the children's lips, and, hiding behind some bushes, they watched the scene before them with scared eyes. Coming from the direction of the river down which the *Blackbird* had appeared, a score of large canoes, each crowded with armed Indians, were skimming across the water, whilst approaching from the opposite direction came Red Blunt and his pirates in one of the *Blackbird's* boats and half a dozen Indian canoes.

"Indians looking for big canoe; bad men looking for big canoe. Not like each other. Dick and Anne rescue friends whilst big fight going on."

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It was Manco who spoke, and at his words Dick sprang to his feet, crying out,

"Come on, Anne. Manco's right. Whilst the Indians and Red Blunt are fighting, we'll rescue Sir Robert and our men."

Anne needed no urging, and, as with wild yells and the crash of musketry the battle joined, the three friends turned and hastened back the way they had come. At a call from Manco the Indians on the *Blackbird* came ashore, and three minutes later, leaving the ship to look after herself, the children were being paddled by their dark comrades towards the river upon the shores of which their friends were imprisoned.

As they went, the sounds of battle grew fainter and fainter. Evidently the pirates were getting the worst of the encounter, and were being driven by their enemies down the coast, so that by the time the rescue party reached the river, the shots and yells had died in the distance. Now the rescuers proceeded warily, for there was no knowing what sharp eyes might be on the watch. Thick, impenetrable forest clothed the river banks, and the canoes had proceeded a mile up its dark course before a break appeared in the trees in front. At the same instant a shrill cry of alarm sounded through the forest, and, looking ahead, the children saw a dozen old men and a crowd of women and children

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clustered on the bank, watching their approach with evident alarm.

Now Manco and his tribesmen drove their paddles into the water, and sent the canoes surging forward, whilst from their throats came savage shouts. At the sight and sounds the crowd upon the bank took fright. Evidently only the old men and women had been left in charge of the village, when the warriors set forth to recapture the *Blackbird;* and these, scared by the sight of their enemies, fled helter-skelter into the forest, leaving the village at the mercy of the newcomers.

Three minutes later the rescuers were ashore, and whilst the men ran from hut to hut, searching for spoil, Manco led the children towards a larger building in the centre of the village. But the prisoners were not there, as the children had hoped and expected, nor did a swift search through the village reveal their presence.

Anxiously Dick looked at Manco. What had become of their friends? Had they made a mistake, and come to the wrong place after all? Putting his hands to his mouth, the boy yelled, "Sir Robert! Sir Robert!" at the top of his voice, and then listened for an answer.

For some seconds there was no reply; then from the forest surrounding the village came a faint answering shout, and a moment later Dick

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and Anne were running in the direction of the cry, with Manco following at their heels. For a hundred yards they ran through the forest; then they came to a clearing, in the centre of which a score of stout stakes were driven into the ground. And securely tied to each stake was one of their lost companions.

It took the children and their Indian friends some time to release the captives, and then many of them were so weak that they could hardly walk.

"We must hurry, Sir Robert," cried Dick. "We have the *Blackbird* hidden amongst some islands, and we must get back to her before the Indians who captured you return."

Accordingly, Sir Robert gathered around him the strongest of the *Seaflower's* crew, and, with the help of Manco and the friendly Indians, they carried their weaker comrades down to the river. There they found some canoes belonging to the village, and soon they were paddling hard down the river towards the *Blackbird* and freedom. An hour later they reached the ship, and hardly had they stepped on board before Manco brought news that the Indian fleet was returning, and that there were several of the pirates captive in the canoes. When Sir Robert heard the news, he turned to Dick, and said,

"It seems to me, my young friend, that I and all my crew owe our lives to you and Mistress Anne.

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Now we had better get to sea whilst we may, for when yonder black rogues discover that we have gone, they will come searching for us, and I for one have no desire to be their prisoner again."

"But the treasure, Sir Robert! You're not going to leave the treasure?" cried Anne.

"The treasure!" cried Sir Robert, and Captain Simon, and Master Trelawny altogether. "From what Red Blunt said," went on Sir Robert, "I thought there *was* no treasure."

"Neither is there where the pirates looked," cried Dick triumphantly. "But we have found it, and by this time to-morrow we can have it all on board, and be on our way to England."

CHAPTER VI.

THE END OF THE QUEST.

After Dick's announcement the children had to tell their story, and when they had done so, Sir Robert and his companions were loud in their praises.

"Now I think we shall do well to stay where we are for the night," said Sir Robert. "The Indians will not come looking for us till morning; besides, 'tis perilous work navigating a ship amongst these islands in the dark."

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Accordingly, it was decided that the *Blackbird* should remain where she was until the next morning, when the work of recovering the treasure could be begun, and, as soon as darkness fell, Sir Robert and his weary men turned in to rest. And sorely they needed it, for the trials and privations of the past weeks had worn them out until only the strongest were fit for duty.

The night was hot and sultry, and, finding themselves unable to sleep in the stuffy cabin, Dick and Anne at last gave up trying, and mounted to the deck above. There for some time they stood gratefully breathing the cooler air, until, becoming suddenly aware of silence all about them, they looked round for the man on watch.

He was not to be seen, and, filled with a sudden dread, the children began to search the deck. But in the darkness they failed to see the watch lying fast asleep against a carronade, and they were wondering whether they ought to rouse Sir Robert and Captain Simon, when, from somewhere away in the darkness, came the sound of oars.

Motionless the children stood, straining their ears for a repetition of the sound. The night was breathlessly still, and presently the beat of oars came again, followed by a low whisper, every word of which was distinguishable in the silence.

" Curse the darkness," said a voice. " The ship's

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near here, I'd swear. I saw her spars this morning before those niggers attacked us, but 'tis so cursed dark that she might be a yard away, and we shouldn't see her."

It was Red Blunt's voice, and at the sound the children gripped hold of each other in sudden terror. Then, as the sound of oars being dipped cautiously in the water again reached them, they ran to the companion-way, and almost fell down the stairs in their hurry to warn their friends below.

"Wake up! Wake up! The pirates are here."

From cabin to cabin the children ran, waking up Sir Robert, and Captain Simon, and the other gentlemen; then back to the forecastle, where they roused the sailors, telling them of the peril which threatened. So the crew of the *Seaflower* gathered silently upon the deck of the *Blackbird*. Each man had armed himself with the first weapon he could lay hands upon, and now they waited ready to repel any sudden attack, whilst upon the quarter-deck Sir Robert and Captain Simon stood talking together in whispers.

"You are sure it was Red Blunt?" said Sir Robert to Dick.

"Certain, Sir Robert!" answered the boy.

"H'm! Then the Indians didn't make an end of the rascals after all. Captain, if they find us, they'll be desperate men, for in the *Blackbird* lies

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their sole hope of getting back to England. Are the guns loaded ? Good ! Perhaps they will miss us in the darkness. 'Tis strange that we have heard no more sounds."

But Sir Robert had hardly ceased speaking when there came a low bump against the side of the *Blackbird*, and the next moment a hoarse voice broke the silence, saying,

" Praise be, here's the ship at last, cap'n. Can't hear no sounds. Don't seem to be nobody on board. Here's a rope. When I get on board, Cap'n, sling us up a lantern, and I'll show a light. Here goes."

Now came the sound of someone clambering up the side of the ship, followed by the thud of a heavy blow as one of the defenders struck down the pirate, who fell back into the boat with a cry of pain. Instantly the night was filled with uproar. From the boat came the flash of muskets and the roar of Red Blunt's voice, ordering his men to board the ship, and kill every one who opposed them ; whilst from farther out upon the water came the splash of oars, as other boats, loaded with pirates, hastened to the attack.

So began a terrible fight. With flash of flame and deafening roar the *Blackbird's* guns were discharged into the night, but in the darkness the shots missed the pirate boats altogether, and a minute

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later the enemy were swarming up the sides of the *Blackbird* to the deck above.

Valiantly Captain Simon and Sir Robert and the men of the *Seaflower* strove to hold their own. Three times they drove their assailants back into their boats, but always Red Blunt and his ruffians returned to the fray, and slowly inch by inch the defenders were driven back, until at last the survivors were clustered in the poop, with the rest of the ship in the pirates' possession.

Now for a moment the assailants drew apart. Both sides had suffered heavily in the fight, and presently out of the darkness came Red Blunt's voice, saying,

"Hark 'ee, Sir Robert. We outnumber your men; moreover, we be strong, whilst many of you be weak with captivity; therefore if we go on fighting in the end you will all be killed, and we be left masters of the ship. So I make 'ee an offer, Sir Robert. Surrender the ship, and you and your men shall go your ways, and maybe you'll win back to England yet; but withstand us, and every man jack of you shall die ere the hour be gone."

Red Blunt's voice ceased, and for some moments there was silence before Sir Robert replied.

"I surrender no ship to you, rascal," he cried. "A noose and a rope over the yardarm is all you will get from me."

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A growl of rage greeted Sir Robert's brave words, and Red Blunt could be heard urging the pirates to return to the fray.

"Oh, it's awful!" cried Anne, clutching hold of Dick's arm, as the children stood against the stern rail of the ship. "Can't we do something? Sir Robert and our men will all be killed, if the fight goes on."

"Where's Manco?" asked Dick, after a moment's thought.

"He and his Indians made camp on the island," answered Anne.

"Then we must find them," replied the boy. "If we can persuade the Indians to attack the pirates in the rear, our men may yet be saved."

The stern of the *Blackbird* was only a few yards from the island, and two minutes later the children were scrambling up the bank. Under the trees it was impossible for the children to see anything, and Dick was wondering which way to go, when from the ship the sounds of conflict burst out anew. There was no time to lose, if they were to aid their friends. Shouting out the name of the Indian boy, the children started to run through the dark woods, tearing their clothes and tripping over fallen branches as they went, and they had covered some distance before a voice answered them out of the darkness, saying,

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"Manco here. What Dick want?"

Somehow the children explained to the young Indian what was happening, and, as soon as he understood that the men who had attacked his father's village were fighting the children's friends, he promised to help them.

"Manco quick. Dick, Anne, stay here," he said, and the next moment he had disappeared into the darkness.

Left alone, the children listened anxiously to the sounds of conflict which reached them faintly through the trees. Sir Robert and his men were still defending themselves stoutly, and presently the children started back towards the ship, returning on board the way they had left. There they found their friends, sadly reduced in numbers, making a last valiant stand against the pirates, and, in an agony of fear lest the Indians should be too late, Dick looked around for Sir Robert. It was impossible to distinguish anybody in the darkness, but at last he heard his voice shouting encouragements to his men, and, going close, Dick whispered in his ear,

"Hold on a little longer, Sir Robert. Help's coming."

"Help! Where should help come from, boy?" asked Sir Robert huskily.

Dick opened his mouth to reply, but before he

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could utter a word, a fiendish yell came from the forepart of the ship, followed by terrified cries from the pirates, and, as if by magic, the survivors of the *Seaflower's* crew found their enemies fleeing before them. With joyful shouts they sprang after their foes, but the pirates, panic-stricken at finding themselves attacked by an unknown foe in their rear, offered no more resistance, and in a few seconds those that survived had tumbled overboard into their boats, and were rowing for their lives through the darkness.

Now Dick sprang between Sir Robert's men and the Indians, crying out that they were all friends, and well it was that he did so, or in the darkness the Indians and the white men might have attacked one another, thinking one another foes. Then Sir Robert called for lanterns, and the survivors set about tending the wounded, and clearing the deck. To the children's joy, it was found that their friends had not suffered so heavily as they had feared. Sir Robert, Captain Simon, Master Trelawny, and old Ben were all unhurt, and as soon as the signs of battle had been cleared away, Sir Robert called the children to him, and thanked them for having saved the lives of all on board.

There was no more sleep that night for anyone on board the *Blackbird*, and as soon as day broke she set sail for the little bay where the galleon had

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gone ashore. Great was Sir Robert's astonishment when the children showed him the galleon buried amongst the trees, and many were his praises, when he saw how they had removed the treasure, and saved it from the pirates.

Then all hands set to work to carry the treasure on board, and by the middle of the afternoon the last golden brick had been removed from the hole in the sand, and stowed away in the cabin of the *Blackbird*. And now farewells had to be made. Swords, axes, and many other presents, which to the Indians were of more value than all the gold in the world, were bestowed upon Manco and his friends, and the last the children saw of the Indian boy, to whom they owed so much, was a slim figure standing on the shore, and waving his hands as the *Blackbird* sailed out to sea.

" If ever I'm rich, I'll buy a ship, and come back here, and see Manco again," said Dick, gazing shorewards.

At his words someone laughed behind the children, and, turning round, they saw Sir Robert and Master Trelawny regarding them with friendly smiles.

" You'll be rich enough, young man," said Sir Robert, " both you and Mistress Anne. Why, lad, but for you and the girl, not only should we never have found the treasure, but we should still be

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prisoners of the Indians, or else killed in the affray last night. We owe you much, and be sure that when it comes to dividing the treasure, you shall each have a generous share. Never, I trow, had a seafarer two stowaways who brought him such luck as you have brought me."

Sir Robert kept his word. When they got back to England, and the treasure was divided, Dick and Anne both found themselves rich beyond their wildest dreams, and though they went back to live with their uncle, Master Fennel, as far as I know he never whipped either of them again.

In after years Dick bought himself a great ship and sailed back to America, where he found Manco again, and renewed the friendship of their youth.

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QUESTIONS.

Chapter I.

1. What is a stowaway? Why were Dick and Anne so anxious to travel on the *Seaflower?*

2. How was the children's hiding-place discovered, and why were they let off so lightly when brought before Sir Robert?

3. Write down what Dick had told Anne about the lost galleon.

Chapter II.

1. Describe the *Seaflower* as far as you can. Say in what respects it would differ from the liners which now cross the Atlantic.

2. Imagine yourself to be on board the *Seaflower*, and describe the fight between that ship and the *Blackbird*.

3. Give a short account of the hurricane which the adventurers encountered.

4. How was it that all those on board the *Seaflower* became the prisoners of Red Blunt?

Chapter III.

1. How did the children make friends with Manco?

2. What did Manco's tribe do to show their gratitude to Dick and Anne?

Chapter IV.

1. Tell me how the children found the treasure ship, and say what they found in it?

2. What was Captain Blunt's plan when he captured the Indians?

Chapter V.

1. What did Dick and Anne learn from Manco about the disappearance of the *Blackbird?*

2. Give a short account of the rescue of Sir Robert and his men, as if you had been one of the rescue party.

Chapter VI.

1. Why did Sir Robert decide to stay for the night where the *Blackbird* was anchored, instead of setting sail straight away for England?

2. What was the last service that the Indians rendered the adventurers, and how were they rewarded?

Printed by E. J. Arnold & Son, Ltd., at their Works, Butterley Street, Leeds, England
hkM-ea-h-ih-14,792p

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